Studies on the HISTORY OF WHITCHURCH

UNVERSITY OF BRISTOL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

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STUDIES ON THE
HISTORY OF WHITCHURCH

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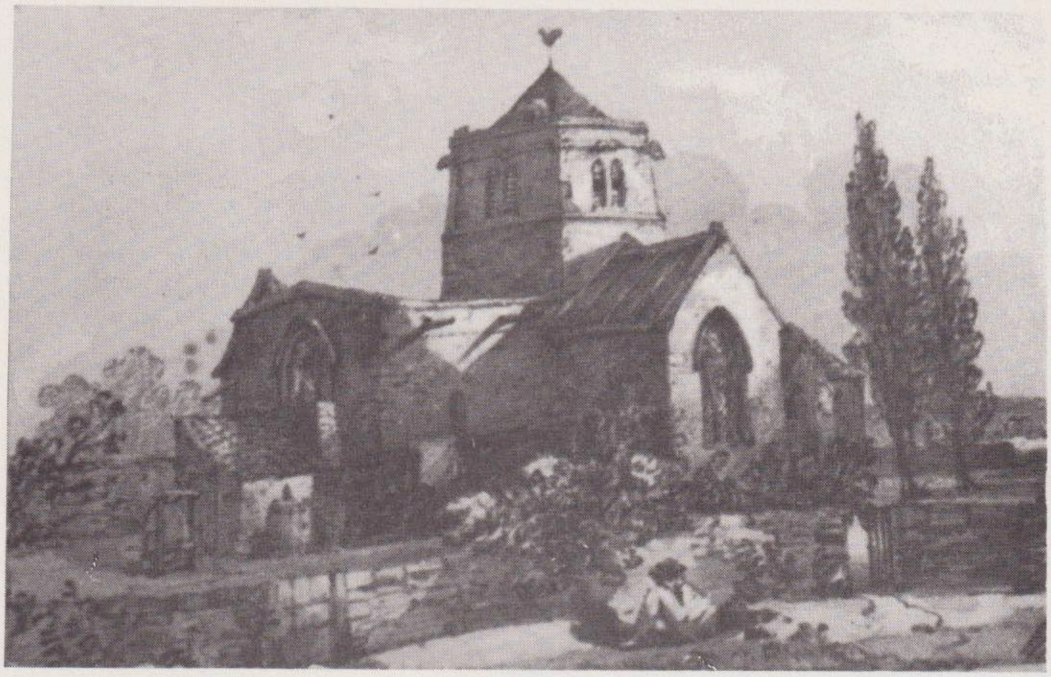
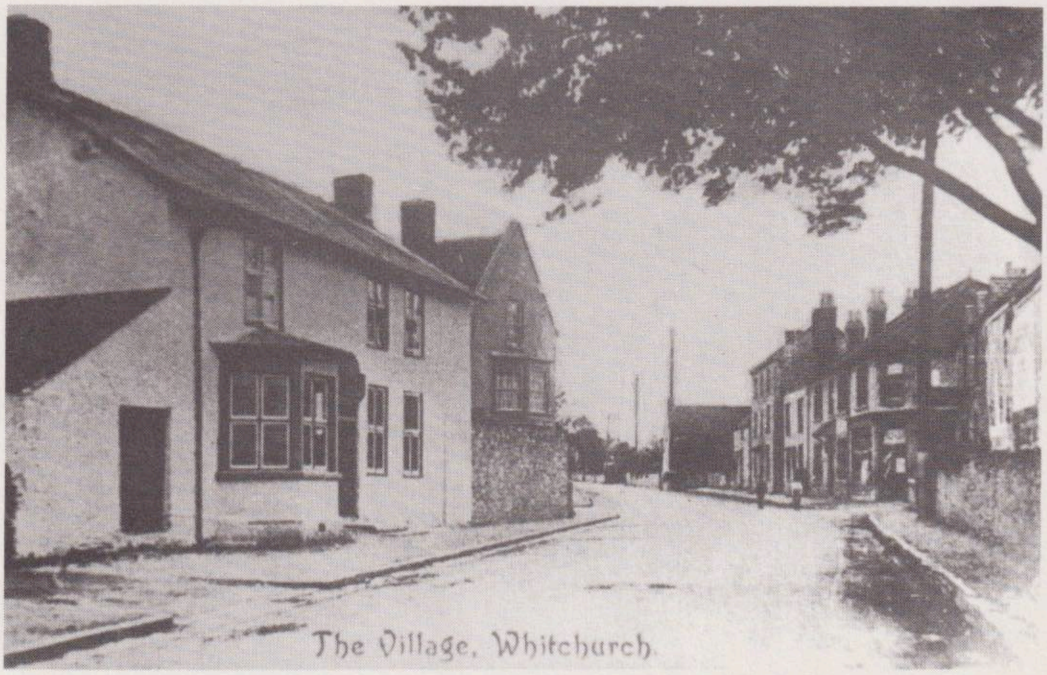
Preface

The following essays were written following a series of lectures on the history of Whitchurch which were arranged by the University of Bristol Department of Extra-Mural Studies,and given by Mr.J.H. Bettey, University Staff Tutor in Local History. The purpose of this booklet is to give a brief outline of some aspects of the history of Whitchurch,to show some of the sources which are available for the study of the history of the parish,and to provide a supplement to accompany the exhibition of maps, pictures and other materials relating to local history to be held in St.Nicholas Church on 12th and 13th June 1976.

We are grateful to the Vicar and Churchwardens for the original suggestion of the lectures and for their help and interest, to the University Extra-Mural Department, to Mr.Bettey for his lectures and advice, to the staff of the Bristol Archives Office, and to the Ministers and Elders of Whitchurch United Reformed Church. We would also like to thank those who have helped in other ways, and particularly by lending material for the exhibition. There is much more to be discovered about the history of Whitchurch, and we hope that this booklet together with the exhibition will lead to increased interest and to further work on the local history of the area.



THE CHURCH FROM A 19th CENTURY WATER COLOUR


The Village, Whitchurch

THE VILLAGE (Circa 1920)

INTRODUCTION

Until the great changes of the twentieth century, the history of Whitchurch was a typical small, rural community, largely dependant upon agriculture for its livelihood. The parish lacked a swift-flowing stream to provide motive power for mills, and was therefore little affected by the various industries which characterised the neighbouring parishes along the valley of the river Chew. Until the last century Whitchurch also remained remarkably unaffected by the proximity of Bristol. As is shown in the following essays,there is ample evidence in the landscape of early settlement in the area and of extensive Roman occupation. The great bronze-age earthwork of Maes Knoll on Dundry Hill dominates the parish,and Roman coins,pottery and burials have been found in many parts,including a large coin hoard discovered at Fillwood in 1869. Near Lyons Court Farm the site of a counterfeit mint for producing spurious Roman coins has been identified,and forms one of the most intriguing aspects of the history of the area. The excavation of this site in 1961 produced a large number of moulds used for casting counterfeit coins, and evidence that the mint was active in the production of false Roman coinage during the third century A.D. It is probable that there was also a Roman villa in the area,possibly near Lyons Court,but the site of this has not yet been discovered.

Whitchurch is also close to the great Saxon linear earthwork of the Wansdyke,which cuts through part of the earlier site at Maes Knoll; and the parish probably takes its name from the popular Saxon saint, St. White.

Few documentary sources of evidence have been found about Whitchurch during the Middle Ages. The lands belonged to the wealthy Augustian abbey at Keynsham,and the abbey had granges at Lyons Court and at Fillwood, of which part of the fine building at Lyons Court survives. The tenants at Whitchurch held their arable land in strips dispersed throughout the large open fields, and also had rights to extensive common grazing land on Dundry and at Leasewood;the little village was clustered around the cross-roads by the parish church.

The fact that the parish church of St. Nicholas remained largely unaltered throughout the Middle Ages, and that it retains much of its interesting Norman character, is in itself evidence of the fact that Whitchurch continued to be sparsely populated and comparatively poor, since if the necessary wealth had been available the church would no doubt have been enlarged and rebuilt at least once, probably with an ornate western tower, as happened in many of the wealthier neighbouring parishes.

From the sixteenth century many more documentary sources relating to Whitchurch become available. The dissolution of the abbey at Keynsham and the dispersal of its lands produced various surveys and other descriptions of Whitchurch, including the informative account of the common grazing lands within the parish in 1579, which also includes details of the grange at Filton or Fillwood and evidence concerning the tenants rights to timber and fuel from the woodland there. The tenants of Whitchurch were allowed to cut from the trees and bushes any branches which they could reach with a bill-hook seven feet long. As is also shown in the following essays, at the end of the sixteenth century most of the lands at Whitchurch passed to the Smythe family of Ashton Court, in whose possession they remained until the twentieth century, and the extensive family papers which are now in the Bristol Archives Office contain a mass of evidence about Whitchurch, including surveys, manorial court rolls, rentals and maps, showing the way in which the land was farmed, and the slow piecemeal process by which the open fields were divided and enclosed by individual tenants to create the modern landscape of fields and hedges.

The fine series of parish registers also begins in the sixteenth century and enables us to learn something of the individuals who lived, worked and died in Whitchurch. From the eighteenth century the parish Vestry Minute Book provides a picture of the way in which the parish was governed, how it cared for the poor and destitute, repaired the church and the local roads, made orders for the control of vermin, apprenticed poor children, and tried to ensure that law and order was kept in the parish. The parish Tithe Map of 1840 provides the first large-scale accurate map of the whole parish and enables us to see the complete landscape, with all the owners and occupiers of land in the little community which still only numbered little more than 400 people, and which scarcely rose above 500 until the early twentieth century. All of these sources, and others, have been used in compiling the following essays, and it is hoped that they will stimulate further interest and research into the past history of the little rural community of Whitchurch.

J. H. Bettey.

Extracts from -

'THE HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET'

Published in 1791 by the Rev. John Collinson F.A.S.
Curate of Whitchurch 1787 - 1793.

FILTON, ALIAS WHITCHURCH

'This village is three miles south from Bristol, and in the turnpike-road from that city through Pensford and Chewton to Wells. Its situation is on high ground; but bounded by still higher on its western extremity, where a lofty ridge of mountain, extending from Mays-knoll to Dundry-Brow, overlooks a vast extent of country.

The lands of this parish are in general a stiffish loam, with clay at the depth of about one foot, and are well cultivated throughout. In the western part on the waste is found lapis haematites, or blood-stone, the powder of which in all ages has been esteemed a sovereign remedy in every kind of haemorrhage, and in ulcers of the lungs. Germany, Italy and Spain, are the countries where it is more commonly produced, and the sort mostly recommended is that found here, which is white, transparent, and little mixed with extraneous particles.

A fine spring,called Saltwell, rises on the west side of the road from this village to Bristol, whence a small rivulet emerging runs through Brislington, and through that very romantick glen of Newick into the river Avon at St. Anne's.

The wood is chiefly elm, of which there is a tree in a farm barton here, remarkably large, measuring in its body nineteen feet in circumference, and each of its limbs, which are ten in number, being considerable timber.

The first name of this place arose from a very ancient town, seated in the long forgotten chace of Filwood, northwest from the present village, whence it had its name, and where, in after days, the abbots of Keynsham had a grange, a chapel, and sundry lands and tenements. But a church having been erected on the more eastward part of the territory where once had stood a cell or chapel of St. Whyte, an ancient British saint, and Filton thenceforth running to depopulation and decay, this district, by reason of its increase of inhabitants emigrating from their pristine dwellings, came to be denominated sometimes by one name and sometimes by the other, and still retains the indiscriminate appellation of FILTON, alias WHITCHURCH.

At the time of the Conquest it was part of the fifty hides of Keynsham, and was afterwards granted by William de Clare earl of Gloucester, to the Austins Canons founded by him on his demesnes in that town. King Edward II confirmed the grant, and it remained with that abbey till its dissolution, when it was attached with other lands to the jointure of Queen Catherine; after whose decease King Edward VI in the fourth year of his reign, granted the manor of Fylton, alias Whitchurch, to Sir John St.Loe, knt, for the term of sixty years.'

There then follows a list of people who in turn owned the land and tithes until they finally passed into the hands of the Smythe family.

'A manor called Lyon's-Court is situated westward from the village of Whitchurch and its mansion is still remaining. It belonged to the family of Lyons (a family distinct from those of the same name at Ashton) so early as the thirteenth century, and were retainers of the Abbots of Keynsham, under whom they held their territory.'

A list of descendants of the Lyons family follows, ending with the Holbeach family, the last of whom died on October 30th 1732.

The rest of the article describes various monuments within the village church, and goes on to say:-

'The pews or seats in this church, a small number excepted, are built of oak, are low and open, run at right angles from side to side, and are nearly coeval with the Reformation, when (exclusively of the nobility, patrons and clergy) people sat in common, and without priority or distinction.

BENEFACTORS

'Sir John Smith, late of Long-Ashton, kn' and bar', gave forty shillings to be distributed on St.Thomas-day to twenty poor people, share and share alike, at the discretion of the minister and churchwarden yearly for ever.

'Mrs.Frances Holbeach, spinster, (daughter of John Holbeach, esq:) gave thirty pounds; ten shillings of the profits thereof to the minister, for preaching a sermon Shrove-Tuesday in the morning, and the remainder to be distributed to the poor in bread the same day yearly for ever.

'Mr.Benjamin Tipput gave five pounds, the profits to the poor for ever.

'Mr.William Opie, sometime sheriff of the city of Bristol, gave to this parish three pounds fourteen shillings yearly for the preaching a sermon in this church once a fortnight on Sunday. He also gave to the poor of this parish twenty shillings, to be laid out in sixpenny bread and distributed on Christmas-day yearly for ever.

'Sir Hugh Smythe, of Long-Ashton, knight of the Bath, and baronet, gave twenty pounds, the profits to the poor for ever.

'Thomas Jones gave five pounds, the profits to the poor for ever.'

'There was a chantry here, endowed with twenty-four acres of arable and pasture land lying in Whitchurch, I Edw. III '

THE EARLY HISTORY OF WHITCHURCH AND DISTRICT

B. SLADE

THE EARLY HISTORY OF WHITCHURCH AND DISTRICT

Much of the early history of Whitchurch and the vicinity can only be based on conjecture, although there is definite evidence in a number of places, which used in conjunction with other information generally available, can be used to build a picture of what the surroundings were like.

The geological structure indicates that the area was under the sea in the dim and distant past. Ammonites (extinct for some 70 million years) and other fossilised marine remains in the local limestone give substance to this theory. Two excellent specimens of ammonites are built into the gables of two cottages opposite the school in Bristol Road.

Early signs of human presence are to be seen in the Iron Age fort at Maes Knoll and in the Wansdyke, the massive Saxon earthwork which passes to the south of Whitchurch. The precise purpose of the Wansdyke is not known for certain, but it was possibly a territorial boundary as well as a defensive structure. It is remarkable that it can still be clearly traced in the landscape after more than a thousand years, and that such an elaborate earthwork could have been built by our ancestors with their primitive tools and meagre numbers.

During the period up to the Norman conquest in 1066, immigrants or invaders from most parts of Europe came to this area. The Iberians came from the Mediterranean (Spain), the Celts, consisting of Britons and Gaels, from the region of the Caspian Sea, Belgae from Belgium, the Romans from Italy, Angles and Saxons from the Saxony region, then the Danes, Vikings and finally the Normans came.

Evidence suggests there have been at least three settlements in the area other than the present village. The earliest one, dating from about 500 B.C. is the 'Iron Age' settlement, the hillfort at Maes Knoll peopled by the Dobbuni tribe who occupied the area at the time, later to be driven out or dominated by the invading Belgae about 100 B.C.

The next site was Roman and in the vicinity of Lyons Court. This lasted from the first to the fourth century. Excavations in 1886, 1891/3 and more recently an extensive dig in 1961 have revealed many Roman relics and moulds used for forging Roman coins. Other Roman coins have been found in the immediate district with a large find on land that belonged to Tyning Farm (somewhere in the region of the present Loxton Square.)

From Collinson's 'History of Somerset' the section dealing with Whitchurch (reproduced earlier in this publication) indicates the vicinity of the Saxon village of Filton (sometimes spelt Felton, Fylton or Phylton) as being between the existing village and Fillwood. This would put it in the region of half way along Bamfield. Another article says the foundations of this ancient village can be observed in times of drought when the ground cracks. A possible site is the field at the end of the old roadway leading from opposite St. Augustines,between Fortfield Road and Bamfield. There are some very definite marks and ridges in this area, and in the spring there are further indications provided by darker areas of grass. The Saxons, unlike the Iron Age people who chose the top of a hill for ease of defence, utilised a place where the land could be cleared and used for cultivation, water was available, wood for building and fuel, and wild game could be found. This site would suit all these requirements as the stream at the bottom of the field would provide water and the surrounding forest that at that time stretched from the banks of the Avon to the Mendip hills would have provided the timber and the hunting. The only remains of the forest are Leigh Woods and the last part to disappear locally was Fillwood.

St. Nicholas church is built on the site of the chapel of St. White and the present name of the village is possibly derived from this (St. White's Church) The tower is Norman, dating from the 12th century, and presumably this was the time when the people moved from the old village to the present one. Only the whole district gets a mention in the 'Doomsday Book' in which the Normans took an inventory of the whole country. It was originally in the '50 Hides of Keynsham.' A hide is thought to be the amount of land needed to support a family including grandparents, sons and their families. Keynsham had a great abbey and administered the district up to the dissolution.The Normans were the last invaders to arrive here, and brought with them law and order, skills in farming and other crafts. They completely integrated with the existing population, already a mixture of all the previous races to arrive, and our present society and language derives from them.

In 1293 the revenues of Keynsham,Whitchurch and Queen Charlton, all belonging to the Augustinian abbey at Keynsham were rated at £26. These lands continued in the possession of the Augustinian canons at Keynsham until the dissolution of the abbey by the orders of Henry VIII in 1539. After the dissolution the lands were given by the King to his last wife Queen Catherine Parr, and were surveyed as 'the farm grange of Fylton, part of the jointure of the monastery of Keynsham in Somerset.'

On the 12th May 1550, two years after the death of Queen Catherine, King Edward VI granted the manor and hundreds of Keynsham to Sir John St.Loe (Knight). The land then passed through the hands of a series of people until it became the property of Hugh Smythe of Ashton Court in 1562.

B. SLADE.

FILTON ALIAS WHITCHURCH
1550 - 1800

D.A. TUFF

FILTON, ALIAS WHITCHURCH 1550-1800

Whitchurch from the 1550s to the early 1800s was a small largely self-supporting, rural parish virtually unaffected by its much larger neighbour the City and County of Bristol, and consisting of the two manors of Lyons Court and Filton or Felton. Much of the parish was owned during the period by the Smythe family of Ashton Court who were granted the estate during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. They were also, with their relations the Gore Langtons of Newton Park, the patrons of the Perpetual Curacy of St. Nicholas church which was valued at the sum of £200 per annum. There were during this period inevitable disputes with the Smythes over land and over the gathering of timber for fuel and even though in 1579 the matter was taken to litigation in London; where at the Public Record Office the documents can still be inspected; the Smythes eventually won the case.

From the extensive collection of Smythe papers in the Bristol Archives office we can see who were tenants of the Smythes; the sizes of their holdings which in 1730 ranged from the 4 acres of James Townsend's Clay Land holding to the 337 acres of Joseph Emery's Whitchurch Farm; the state of the holdings and, from the maps, the positions within the parish. For instance we see that in 1800 the estate known as Upper and Lower Garbage Leaze was "impoverished and badly managed" with "the buildings in very bad condition". This small estate stood under Maes Knoll hill on what is now the top end of Bridge Farm housing estate. However not all the land in the parish was owned by the Smythe family so that there are considerable areas for which we have no records except the Tithe Map.

There were also at the latter end of the period many court cases; the records of which can be seen in the Land Registry Office; to exchange strips of land, the legacy of the medieval open fields system for larger fields to be enclosed by hedges or fences for ease of working.

WHITCHURCH

NAMES OF FARMS AND OCCUPIERS LISTED IN A SURVEY OF THE MANOR MADE FOR SIR JOHN SMYTH, BART., IN 1730 (Bristol Archives Office AC/M11/32)

Farm Name	Occupier	Acreage
Whitchurch Farm	Isa. Emery	337 acres
Filwood Farm	James Forest	201
Willcox's Farm	John Filler	132
Tining Farm	John Roome	134
Stones Farm	Mrs. Mary Batt	29
Taylors Farm	Richard Lansdown	75
Tippetts Farm	Joseph Hillier	92
Jones Farm	Thos. Hart	29
Bridge Farm	William Binney	48
New Close Farm	Isa. Abbot	21
Roomes Cott	John Roome	8
Hassells Farm	Joseph Abbot	49
Willson's Farm	Joseph Abbot	21
Rodford's Farm	Robt. Blanch	25
White Hart Inn	Benj. James	2
Yeamans	Robert Blanch	4
Woodwards Farm	Wm. Whippie	72
Days Farm	Mrs. Anne Whippie	70
St. Loe's Tenement	Mrs. Anne Whippie	12
Ditty's Farm	Mrs. Mary Ball	46
Home Tenement	John Goodhind	79
Cross Farm	John Goodhind	54
Sharp's Farm	John Goodhind	48
Lewis Croft	John Whippie	6
Lower Green	Thos. Whippie	81
Higher Green	John Hazell	70
Lag's Ground	Samp. Yeaman	4
Clay Land	James Townsend	4
Church House	- -	-
New House Farm (in Keynsham parish)	Henry Flower	83

Land in Hand - 836 acres
Freeholds in Whitchurch - 204 acres

Total - 2,122 acres.

Apart from the records mentioned above the main source of written information about the parish is to be found in the church records. The parish registers were started in 1599 though there are entries copied from earlier sheets going back to 1567. This was in accordance with the Provincial Constitution of Canterbury of the 25th of October 1597 approved by Queen Elizabeth in 1598. This ordered that parchment registers should be purchased by each parish and that all names from the earlier (usually paper) registers "should be copied therin from the beginning but especially since the first year of her majesty's reign" (1558). It would appear that in Whitchurch, as in many other parishes, the statute was only partially obeyed.

The records are virtually complete from 1567 to the present day including the interregnum of Oliver Cromwell when many registers were not made up. In fact "William Jones of the parish of Whitchurch approved and chosen Register of the Say'd parish according to y$^{\underline{e}}$ Act of Parliament in that case provided 26th of January 1654" seems to have been most conscientious, keeping the records in good order throughout his term of duty. These "Registers", not registrars as one would suppose, appointed by the above Act of Parliament took over the keeping of the parish records from the parish priest and were often semi-literate and neglectful of their duties.

Most of the Ministers of Whitchurch seem to have kept the registers in good order, one of the few exceptions being the Rev. John Collinson the minister from 1787-1793, best known for his "History of Somerset", who made virtually no entries in the register of Baptism and Burial during his years at Whitchurch. Fortunately his successor, the Rev. Israel Lewis, filled in some entries for these years but we can only surmise at the source of his information.

Among the most interesting of the burial entries are those relating to burials in wool under the acts of 1666 and 1678. These provided that "no corpse of any person (except those who shall die of plague) shall be buried in any shirt shift sheet or shroud or anything whatsoever made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver or in any stuff or thing, other than what is made of sheeps' wool only or be put into any coffin lined or faced with any other material but sheeps' wool only. Affidavits had to be sworn by relatives of the deceased in front of witnesses that the provisions of the Act were kept and in the Whitchurch register there are several pages of these affidavits. Heavy penalties were ordered upon those not complying with the Acts which must surely be the ultimate in protectionist legislation. The law was not finally repealed until 1814 though it had fallen into disuse in most parishes long before this.

Whitchurch for much of its history has been just outside the Diocese of Bristol and the first Church in the Diocese of Bath and Wells and it seems at odd periods to have been used as a local "Gretna Green" for runaway weddings from Bristol. This was particularly noticeable in the 1740s when the Rev. Thomas Hay married more couples from outside the parish than parishioners. One of the more unusual of these entries was "Joseph Capuco of $y^{\underline{e}}$ Kingdom of Genoa and Mary Horseman of $y^{\underline{e}}$ City of Bristol was married in $y^{\underline{e}}$ parish church of Whitchurch $y^{\underline{e}}$ 8 Day of January 1748:9. We can only guess as to the circumstances of the wedding: Was it a local rich girl running off with a handsome foreign sea captain? But of course we shall probably never know. It was also during the 1740s that "Thomas Clarck a Black from Bristol (presumably a freed slave) was baptised: But again we can only wonder what trick of fate brought him to Whitchurch.

From the registers we can also see the all too frequent visitations of plagues of one sort or another and we find that deaths in 1645 in one of the last great outbreaks of Bubonic Plague in England were 14, the highest annual number of burials for at least 300 years and about four times the normal average for the parish. We also find that there is a positive correlation between burials, baptism and marriages. Years of high death rates also appear to be years of high marriage and of high birth rates. Why this should be is not obvious, with plague or famine decimating the population one would not expect people to be thinking of marriage or increasing a family. One possible explanation, however, may be that plagues opened the way to the inheritance of the family holding for the surviving son who would naturally have taken a wife to help run it.

From the Parish Registers we can also get a very rough idea of the size of the population which seems to have been about 200 from 1600 to 1700 rising to 362 in 1801 when records were first kept. Unfortunately as the parish was so small there seems to have been considerable population movement between it and the neighbouring parishes so that it is impossible to get a realistic idea of average life expectancies etc. Any research into this is also further hindered by the difficulties in positive identification of entries especially in the register of burials where occur such entries as "buried Farmer Abbot" and "buried Mrs. Lansdowne". However the registers show that Whitchurch consistently had an average of more baptisms than burials and as the growth of population was so slow we must presume that a considerable number of people left the parish to work elsewhere, either in the rich City of Bristol or the small industrial settlements along the River Chew.

We find the same families evident right throughout the earlier registers; the Whippies, Goodhinds, Lansdownes, Lukins, Hazzells and several others being resident in the village for over three hundred years. We also find that many of these local families had skeletons hidden in the cupboard, skeletons that must have caused much family upset in a community as small as Whitchurch at a time when according to the century the mother of a bastard child could either be sent to a house of correction for a year or be publicly whipped. These laws, as one would expect, had the effect of encouraging abortion and infanticide or the abandoning of the poor child to the mercy of the parish. There are baptisms of about half a dozen of these foundlings in the Whitchurch Records, several of these being given the surname "Whitchurch" i.e. "Charlotte Whitchurch, a child found in the parish, Oct. 18th, 1764". The most pathetic of these entries was in 1751 "Benjamin a child that was found in Mr. Emery's stalls bapt. January y^{e} 26th 1751:2" and "Bur: February y^{e} 9th 1751:2". Mr. Emery was the occupier of Whitchurch Farm already referred to.

The other main source of information in the Church Records is the series of Vestry Minute Books which date back to 1772, though there were earlier books unfortunately no longer in existence. The Vestry was the government of the parish and for most of its life met in one or other of the village inns, the White Hart or the Black Lion. These meetings dealt with poor relief, roads, maintenance of the church, electing of the parish officers such as Churchwardens, Overseer of the Poor, Waywarden and Constable and the levying of poor rates, church rates and any special rate such as the 6d rate levied for the Army of Reserve during the Napoleonic Wars.

The principal duty however of the Vestry in Whitchurch was the application of the various poor laws at a minimum cost to the parish. For example we find in the 1770s we can follow the early years of a parish foundling, Patience Whitchurch, until on the 28th November 1780 she was apprenticed to Mrs. Goodhind, a tenant of several of the Smythe holdings. This apprenticing of pauper children was the usual way of getting them off the parish, with the parents having virtually no say in the matter if they wanted to keep their own poor relief and there are many instances of this in the Whitchurch records. For instance at a Vestry held in 1782 three children were apprenticed, James Clements age 13 years, John Lavington age 10 years and William Harris age 10 years.

The acts governing poor relief also allowed for the seizure at death of the goods of a person on poor relief and in 1777 the Parish Overseer seized the goods of the deceased Thomas Harris, possibly the father of William Harris mentioned above, and left in the minutes a complete inventory, unfortunately too long to list here, of what was probably a fairly typical cottage of the period.

We see in 1779 the parish giving up its right to seize such household goods for a guarantee of a person being given lodgings for life, e.g. "W. Parker engaged to take his mother in law Hester Harris at 2 shillings per week, the said Parker to have the household goods in lieu of firing for the life of the said Hester Harris and further the said Parker engages to bury the said Hester Harris when she dies." The 2 shillings a week would be provided from the poor rate and the firing referred to is probably a reference to the coal often provided for those on relief. Hester Harris does not appear to have been a close relative of the two Harrises already mentioned. In fact at the time of her daughter's marriage to William Parker she was living in Dundry but obviously by the date of the minute must have obtained legal settlement in Whitchurch.

We also find in the minutes cases of the parish paying for medical attention for sick paupers and even in 1807 paying £9 for William Hiscox to be admitted to Bath hospital as well as providing him with the clothes required and transport to get there. That is not to say that poor relief in Whitchurch was run on the lines of the Welfare State as we can see from the following entry of April 22nd, 1794. "At a Vestry held this day within this Parish of Whitchurch ordered that the Overseer as soon as possible do remove Robt. Whippie and Mary his wife to the Poor House and if they will not remove their pay to be taken off as the Parish is determined to pay no more rent". One of the signatures to this order is Richard Whippie obviously a fairly close relation of the couple. There may however be a further reason for this marked lack of family charity. Richard Whippie like most of his family was pillar of the established Church but a Mary Whippie was according to the records of the Whitchurch United Reform Church a member of the non-conformist congregation at about this time. If, as seems likely, this was the Mary Whippie referred to in the minutes it would have been ample reason for her relatives to have her and her husband carried off to the Poor House.

By 1798 the original Poor House had become too small for the increasing numbers of poor in the parish and at a Vestry held on the 2nd of January the Churchwardens and the Overseer, James Colston were to be allowed to build extra houses in the churchyard for the use of the poor. These are probably some of the houses still standing above the junction of Bristol Road and Church Road.

The office of Overseer of the poor was never a popular office, the holder having to keep the parish poor at a minimum expense to the ratepayers who were generally none too keen on paying their poor rates or attending the Vestry meetings to discuss the poor of the parish. In 1791 George Stocker the then Overseer called four separate meetings including one at 10 at night so as not to interfere with the gathering of the harvest without a single person turning up to any of them. Of course this may have been partly because he called for the meetings to be held in the church instead of in the more usual inn, where normally refreshment was provided out of the poor rate, e.g. "Sept. 29th, 1812. At a Vestry meeting held this day we allow 10 glasses of Gin and Water and 3 quarts of Beer and 2 Pipes." The total cost of this was 4/6d or over twice the amount the W. Parker referred to earlier was given each week to keep his mother-in-law.

The various poor laws of the period provided everyone with a place of settlement and throughout the minutes we find records of litigation either to return paupers to their alleged place of settlement or to attempt to prevent other parishes sending to Whitchurch these paupers or near paupers whom they considered belonged there. e.g. "At a Parish Meeting held this 22 of Sept. 1795 we whose names are underwritten do alow and agree to carry on the Law Suit with the Parish of Bruton in respect of Wm. Fisher's Parish of Settlement." Of course the only ones who gained from this litigation were the lawyers, half of the business of every quarter session consisted in deciding appeals on orders of removal and countrywide the cost of this litigation rose from £35,000 in 1776 to £287,000 in 1815. In most cases it would have been far cheaper for the parish to accept the person and pay him relief than to go to the expense of law, but commonsense seldom prevailed and even a very small parish like Whitchurch paid out considerable sums to the Overseer for his task of ascertaining a pauper's place of legal settlement, to the lawyers to press this in court, and for the actual cost of removing the pauper.

One of the less costly duties of the Vestry was the payment for the destruction of vermin and on July 1719 we find that "It was agreed that the Churchwardens do Pay for the Killing of Sparrows at the Rate of three pence a Dozen Brought to him". The killing of such vermin was a usual children's job which helped the family's normally very inadequate income.

The other main duty of the Vestry was the care of the fabric of the church though this duty was generally neglected; the churchwardens being loth to raise the extra church rates necessary to pay for repairs. However in 1791 there was a Vestry called to "take into consideration the present ruinous state of the Church" and work was eventually put in hand by Robert Pobjoy of Bristol but even this was subsidised by the sale of a bell for £10 to Thomas Bilbie the famous clockmakers and bellfounders of Chew Stoke. There were then various attempts to patch up the church during the next half century until eventually in 1861 a much needed restoration was carried out which left the church much as we see it today. The only expense to the parish for the work was a special rate of 6d in the pound, payable in two instalments one at Midsummer, the second at Christmas; a cheap price to pay to prevent further deterioration in the building that had been the centre of village life for six hundred years.

Finally I would like to thank the Vicar, the Rev. Craig, and the Churchwardens of St. Nicholas Church for allowing me access to the church records without which this essay could not have been started, and Mr. Bettey of the University of Bristol Extra Mural Department without whose help and inspiration it would not have got underway.

D.A. TUFF

June, 1976

WHITCHURCH LIFE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

(Based on the 1851 Census
and other sources)

E.S. & A.D. WOOD

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WHITCHURCH LIFE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

1. SITUATION

Whitchurch lies just over 3 miles due south of the city of Bristol. Its separation from Bristol, however, has been so lessened by the urban sprawl of the city and by the increasing speed and nature of transport that the visitor could be forgiven for not appreciating that Whitchurch is not and never has been a suburb of Bristol.

The earliest ordnance survey map of this area, published in 1817, shows Whitchurch in complete isolation from Bristol and this is proved in detail in the first ordnance survey map produced to a scale of six inches to the mile dated 1889.

The 'six-inch' map shows that Bristol's habitation extended into Lower Knowle and the lower part of the George Hill. Beyond that, buildings were sparse, and non-existent from the top of the Red Lion Hill all the way to the Manor House and White Cross Court, the latter having been built in 1786.

It is difficult to envisage that at the top of Knowle was Queens Dale Farm, Kingshill House, together with a few buildings grouped around the Red Lion and some old lime kiln workings. Hengrove consisted of Hengrove House and Farm with just a long stretch of countryside until Whitchurch - a small group of buildings with church and chapel. Perhaps the present separation of Queen Charlton helps us to imagine what Whitchurch may have been like in those days.

2. POPULATION

The population of Whitchurch had increased from 362 in 1801 to 428 in 1851. For comparison, numbers in Whitchurch were considerably smaller than those of Chew Magna (2,124), Publow (810), Dundry (592), Stanton Drew (592); marginally greater than Compton Dando (384), and substantially more than Norton Malreward (113).

In 1851, the division by age-groups was as follows -

	Male	Female	Total
Up to 5 years	34	37	71
6 - 15 years	42	50	92
16 - 30 years	54	41	95
31 - 55 years	50	54	104
56 - 65 years	12	14	26
Over 65	21	19	40
	213	215	428

By the end of the century (1901) the population of Whitchurch had increased to 544 and was in fact greater than most of the surrounding villages with the exception of Chew Magna which had declined by that time to 1,526.

By 1971, the population in the parish of Whitchurch had increased to 843 (some changes in boundary) but the numbers who regard themselves as living in the Whitchurch area* has probably increased to some 7,000.

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*Say an area bounded by the railway line to the east, Wharncliffe Gardens, Fortfield Road, Longway Avenue and including the parish.

3. BUILDINGS

The 1851 Census, which was taken on 30th March of that year, records Whitchurch as having 78 completed buildings in use, one building void (i.e. uninhabited) and one building in the course of construction.

Buildings or places specifically mentioned in the Census were White Cross House and Whitchurch Green on the east side of the Turnpike road and Bridge Farm, Whitchurch Farm, Tailers Cottage, Filwood Farm, Yew Tree, Brick Yard Cottage, Old Parsonage House and Lyons Court Farm on the west side of the Turnpike road.

At this time the window tax was still in force starting at houses with 8 or more windows -

		per house p.a.
e.g.	8 windows	16/6d
	9 "	21/-d
	10 "	28/-d

with some exemptions for farmhouses. There is evidence in the parish of buildings where windows were blocked up to escape the tax and a particularly good example is 111 Bristol Road where the two landing windows were sacrificed.

4. ACREAGE, FARMS & EMPLOYMENT

Kelly's directory of Somerset for 1861 lists the acreage of the parish of Whitchurch as 1,911 acres. (Rateable value in 1866 was £4,214).

The predominant land use was farming. Interestingly, the 1851 census lists the farms in the parish for which the claimed acreage of some 17 farms, in aggregate, amounts to 1,951 acres.

Details, together with the number of labourers recorded specifically as being employed on these farms, is set out below -

Name of Farm	Name of Farmer	Acreage	Number of labourers
	John Lucas	71	2
	Milborne Williams	260	8
	George W. Hall	63	1
Whitchurch Green	Thomas Vowles	162	3
White Cross	Edward Colston	100	2
	Richard Carter	8	-
	John Brimble	45	2
	James B. Colston	?	?
Bridge Farm	Susannah Wait (Widow)	110	3
Whitchurch Farm	John Scammell	269	7
	John Derrick	118	1
	William Carpenter	?	3
Tailors Cottage	James Cox	40	-
	John Derrick	29	-
Filwood Farm	Benjamin Hall	250	9
	John Jefferis	116	2
Lyons Court	John Day Colston	110	4
		1,951	47

The number of labourers actually living in the parish of Whitchurch at the time was about 80 of which 70 were specifically recorded as agricultural or farm labourers with a further 4 described as day labourers.

Wages for adult male agricultural workers were probably in the region of 10/- to 12/- per week plus such perquisites as might be available in the form of living accommodation and food. Employment of women in agriculture on a regular basis was generally discouraged during the second half of the 19th century but the employment of children was relatively common.

Five boys, ages ranging from 10 - 12, are shown in the Whirchurch census as agricultural labourers but we do not know whether this was on a full-time basis or not. Where employment was available to supplement the family income by a few shillings per week or so, schooling was abandoned perhaps permanently or for a few weeks or months. Those trying to teach them complained that, on their return to school, most had forgotten what had been learnt on a previous occasion.

Children were often employed in scaring birds, known as 'bird-keeping'. This usually occurred for a month or six weeks or so just after the corn had been sown and again when the corn was ripening. Bird activity is governed by daylight hours so that children had to be in the fields at all hours from 5 a.m. until sunset, seven days a week - including Sundays and in all weathers.

The Vestry Meeting of 14th April 1846, held in the Vestry Room, took the following decision -

> "It was agreed that all sparrows, yellow hammers, twinks and green linnets destroyed in the parish, and brought to the Churchwardens, being not less than a dozen, the Churchwardens are here authorised to grant for the same, at the rate of 3 pence per dozen."

The rate had not changed in over fifty years, for in 1789 the Vestry minutes record a decision that the Churchwardens should pay for the killing of sparrows at the rate of 3 pence per dozen - brought to them.

5. LIVESTOCK & CROPS

Details of farming livestock are available since 1866. The following selected figures for 1866, 1880 and 1901 remind us all too clearly of the changes which have occurred in the parish since that time -

	1866	1880	1901
Number of -			
Horses	n/a	66	96
Cattle	385	302	339
Sheep	1,373	719	805
Pigs	158	87	125

Selected information in respect of returns made in 1880 and 1901 shows the crop division of acreage as follows -

	1880	1901
	- acres -	
Crops		
Cereals	151	158
Beans	7	19
Peas	4	6
Potatoes	9	15
Turnips/swedes	20	14
Mangold	5	13
Vetch	2	6
Other	1	2
Fallow	63	6
Clover/Grass	162	52
Meadow	980	1,464
Orchard	20	31
Market Garden	3	-
	1,427	1,776
Number of returns:	22	30

In the 19th century the land was used mainly for pasture farming - the raising of sheep and cattle.

6. OCCUPATIONS

As we have seen, Whitchurch was relatively pastoral lacking the industries of mining, milling and metal working which flourished in the Chew Valley at this time.

Reference is made in another section to farmers and those engaged in agriculture. Other occupations represented in Whitchurch were a carpenter, butcher, brick-maker, miller, plasterer and tiler, victualler, innkeeper, cordwainer, boot binder, haydealer, dressmaker, tailoress, grocer, blacksmith and launderess. In addition there were two highway labourers and a collector of tolls.

There were two inns in the village - the Black Lion where Mr. Curtis, a victualler aged 36, ran his business with the help of his wife and two servants and the White Hart, where Mr. Heal, aged 82, described himself as an innkeeper and ran his establishment with the help of his wife, aged 70, and a servant aged 19. By 1861 the Black Lion was in the hands of Mrs. Martha Allen and the White Hart had passed to James Colston who was described in the 1851 Census as a widower, aged 36 - at that time farming. These two inns were situated next to each other at the side of the turnpike road on the site now occupied by the modern Black Lion.

There were three carpenters, William Belston aged 36, Joseph Weeks aged 26, and a youth Amos Browning aged 14.

Some of the butchers showed particular longevity: James Hiscox 79, at that time on parish relief, and Thomas Rich aged 81. Perhaps we may assume most of the butchering was carried out by William Tuck aged 46 and James Brimble aged 43.

No village would be complete without its blacksmith and Whitchurch was no exception. This was in the hands of Joseph Fowles aged 31, married with 4 children ages ranging from 1 - 7.

The village contained two cordwainers (i.e. a boot & shoe maker) and two boot binders. The word cordwainer has now passed out of use and it is interesting to discover that its origin was based on the name of a goat skin leather originally from Cordova in Spain.

7. SERVANTS

The 1851 Census lists 35 people as servants: this included 2 nursemaids each aged 12 years and 2 charwomen. Of the adult (15+) population of 250, servants represented some 14%. Most of these were female and worked as servants in the various farm households.

An example was the Vowles family who farmed 162 acres at Whitchurch Green. He (46) and his wife (39) had six children, ages ranging from 1 year to 12 years, and they employed Fanny Bowditch, aged 20, from Clutton and George Fox, aged 17, from Stanton Drew as servants. At this time there was a tax on male servants, aged over 18, starting at 24/-d per head per annum, increasing with the number of servants per household.

Also, at Whitchurch Green, in a separate establishment, lived the Curate and his wife, served by Sarah Gerrard, aged 20, from Beaminster, Dorset and Jane Wagland, aged 21, from Babcary, Somerset.

At White Cross House lived Mary Colston with her son who was unmarried and farmed 100 acres, together with her daughter and a visitor who was also a widow and like Mary Colston was an annuitant. This household included 3 servants - Elizabeth Doil (? Doyle) origin "not known" (?Ireland), Eleanor Macaty from Somerset and John Collor from Wiltshire who worked also as a farm labourer.

At Bridge Farm, the Wait family, Susannah - a widow aged 74, Susannah - a widow aged 50, and Susannah - a daughter aged 19, employed Ann Hall (aged 17), a servant from Oaksey in Wiltshire.

At Whitchurch Farm, the Scammells employed Jane Aram from Edington in Wiltshire. Farmer Derrick employed Jemina Brown, aged 41, from Stanton Drew and Eliza Tiler, aged 18, from Dundry.

Farmer Carpenter employed Louisa Harris, aged 18, from Stanton Wick. At Filwood Farm the Halls employed Joseph Porter, aged 22, as farmer's servant from Weston Zoyland and William Payden, aged 16, as farmer's servant from Dundry as well as Eliza Baker, aged 21, from Priston. Elizabeth Tanels, aged 12, who came from Bedminster was employed as a nursemaid to Benjamin and Abraham Hall aged 3 years and 8 months respectively.

The other nursemaid, Jane Meredith, from Pensford, also 12 years old, was employed by Joseph Weeks, 26, a carpenter, to look after Sarah and Mary Weeks aged 2 years and 5 months respectively.

A branch of the Colston family occupied Lyons Court and they employed as servants Margaret Barwell, aged 19, from Hinton Blewett and Mary Hieron, aged 16, of Whitchurch.

It is considered that people wealthy enough to employ servants generally liked to obtain them from outside the parish, perhaps to avoid gossip and to prevent local people from knowing too much about their households. In Whitchurch, as in most other places, the servants came from elsewhere, and often from very long distances.

The age distribution of the resident population, between males and females aged 15 - 30, would suggest that perhaps a dozen or so young women had left Whitchurch in order to seek employment (? as servants) in other communities, it being easier for males to obtain local employment as farm labourers.

8. RELIGIOUS WORSHIP

Concurrent with the 1851 Census it was decided to conduct, on the same day 30th March 1851, a census of places of worship together with numbers attending.

The Church dedicated to St. Nicholas is recorded as St. White's Church - the ancient parish church of an ancient chapelry, consecrated before 1800.

The number of 'sittings' is shown as 255: of these, 160 were free and the remaining 95 were rented by individuals who alone had the right to sit in them.

The morning attendance on that day was 89 (44 general congregation and 45 Sunday scholars) and the afternoon attendance was 118 (73 general congregation and 45 Sunday scholars).

The Rev. J.B. Plummer (Curate) estimated that average attendance was normally 90 in the morning and 130 in the afternoon. The weather on Sunday 30th March 1851 was very bad, and attendances were therefore somewhat below normal.

The Church was restored in 1861; the Vicarage was built in 1883 and demolished (finally) in April 1976.

On the same day, March 30th 1851, a separate return was completed in respect of Zion Chapel of independent denomination where Mr. John Brimble, farmer, and trustee of the Chapel, records the morning attendance as 60 (general congregation 33, Sunday scholars 27) and the evening attendance as 85. He estimated that normally the morning attendance was 70, the evening attendance 90.

All the sittings in the chapel were free. The first chapel building was erected in 1831 but replaced by the present building which was opened on Whit Sunday 1867. It is perhaps worth recording that the return in respect of the Chew Magna Wesleyan reform chapel was submitted over the name of its steward, Mr. George Brimble.

(There was also an Independent (or Congregational) chapel at Knowle in 1851. It had been built in 1832, and provided 150 free seats, but no figures were given in the census returns for attendance on Sunday, 30th March 1851).

It is difficult to be exact in determing the numbers who regularly went to church or chapel in Whitchurch at this time, some 14 years into Queen Victoria's reign, but assuming that church and chapel worshippers did not overlap, a minimum of 220 individuals attended a place of worship on Sundays. This, out of a population of 428 is a percentage which current incumbents would be pleased to enjoy.

The combined numbers of Sunday scholars amounted to 72 on the day in question but more normally the figure was estimated at 85 which means that almost all children in the age range 5 - 14 years inclusive could be regarded as Sunday scholars. The remaining attendance, say a minimum of 135, represented 50% of the adult population (15+).

The Sunday schools also provided instruction in reading and writing as well as purely religious education.

9. PLACE OF BIRTH

The 1851 Census provides the first census record of the inhabitants' place of birth and it is interesting to note that only about one-third of the husbands and about one-third of the wives had actually been born in Whitchurch. Not surprisingly, perhaps, some 75% of listed offspring are shown as having been born in the parish.

This indicates a more varied and mobile population than might perhaps have been expected although, of course, many of the inhabitants not actually born in Whitchurch came from the surrounding parishes e.g. Norton Malreward, Keynsham, Chew Magna, Dundry, East Harptree, Publow etc.

Some of the more widely-flung origins were Fonthill Gifford, South Petherton, Blackland, Stockley (Wilts), Broad Blumsden, Budleigh Salterton, Marston Magna, King's Lynn, Halstock (Dorset), Calne, Quantoxhead, Glastonbury, Berkeley (Glos.) and Oxford.

Some others resident in the parish, not being householders, wives or offspring, came from slightly farther afield e.g. Wales, Manchester, Middlesex, Shropshire and one household had staying with it a boy of 13 who had been born in St. James, London. Curiously enough, the head of this household was Mr. Dodge born in Dorset, his wife born in Norfolk and the child from St. James - Master Henry Cummings - is described as son-in-law! It is unlikely that this is accurate; he is more likely to have been a step-son.

Perhaps the most surprising occupant was the young man, Thaddeus Connellan aged 28, who came from Dublin and was lodging in Whitchurch as an Inland Revenue Officer of the Excise Department.

The Chelsea Pensioner of the village was born in Brislington, married a woman from North Curry to whom a child was born at Stanton Drew. The Pensioner hospitals were rather full at this time and a number of pensioners had to live out but the security of their pension made them a reasonably attractive match in spite of their age, and this is borne out by the Whitchurch Chelsea Pensioner who is recorded at 68 years, his wife 56, with a son 7 years old. We do not know whether he took part in the Napoleonic Wars but since he would have been around 30 at the time it seems highly likely.

The Curate then aged 44 was born in Bristol and his wife Mary Ann, 42, was born in Brislington.

10. PAUPERS

There was a poor house in the parish and its position is ascertainable by reference to the tithe map: it was sited in the centre of the village just a few doors along the road from what is now the saddler's shop - at 111 Bristol Road. No information appears in the 1851 census about its inhabitants (if any) but of course by that time the poor law unions had been formed and Whitchurch was a part of the Keynsham Poor Law Union which started in 1836. The real poor would therefore have found themselves transferred to the Union workhouse at Keynsham, the parish unit not being sufficiently capable of providing for its poor. The census does list, however, four individuals, living in households in the village, who were classified as paupers or receiving parish relief. These were two men aged 70 and 79 and two women aged 73 and 84.

The vestry minute book records, up until the 1890's, the annual election of two individuals as 'Overseers of the Poor'; in fact names of individuals serving as 'Overseer' are available back to 1691.

At the other end of the scale were 3 widows, 60, 70 and 70; one young lady of 27 and a man, aged 44, described as annuitants plus the two misses Colston 72 and 78 years (living separately) classified as "living independent".

11. MARRIAGES - SIGNATURE OR MARK

From 1754 onwards it became obligatory for all persons getting married in a parish church either to sign the register or to make a mark.

From the marriage registers of Whitchurch therefore it is possible to determine the number of marriages each year together with those brides and bridegrooms who, being unable to sign their name, could only give a written record in the form of a mark, usually a cross X.

The information, summarised in ten year cycles to show a trend, is set out below -

		Signed with Cross X	
Summary	No. of Marriages	Bridegroom	Bride
1754/60	20	9	17
1761/70	22	12	19
1771/80	20	7	14
1781/90	20	9	15
1791/1800	9	4	4
1801/10	8	2	4
1811/20	9	0	0
1821/30	33	10	14
1831/40	41	17	19
1841/50	11	6	7
1851/60	6	1	1
1861/70	6	2	0
1871/80	12	4	1
1881/90	10	3	1
1891/1900	17	1	1

No weddings are recorded in the parish during the period 1809/1813 and it is interesting that the population fell at this time from 362 in 1801 to 310 in 1811, rising to 403 in 1821.

It can be seen that an apparent improvement in the ability to write in the early 1800's was followed in 1820/1840 with a state of affairs no better than the second half of the 18th century. The real improvement was, of course, after 1850.

The last person to sign with a cross X in Whitchurch was a widower (aged 64) who remarried in 1911. Prior to that we have to go back to a bridgroom (aged 21) in 1895 and a bride (aged 21) in 1893.

The position for England and Wales as a whole was that, in 1841, 33% of men and 49% of women could not sign at their weddings; in 1861, 25% and 35% respectively. The position for Whitchurch is not too dissimilar from this.

12. SCHOOLS & SCHOLARS

Information regarding schools is not as clear as one would like and further probing is necessary. However, the following collection of items provides some picture -

1. Chapel Sunday School started 1817.

2. 1819 Parliamentary Return mentions one Sunday school attended by 30 children.

3. 1835 Parliamentary Return records -

> "Three daily Schools in which are 19 males and 19 females; one Boarding school containing 22 females all of whom are taught at the expense of their parents. Three Sunday Schools (wherein are 48 males and 32 females), in two whereof (commenced 1830) are 56 children who attend the Established Church; the other consists of 24 children and is connected with Methodists. These Sunday Schools are supported by contributions".

4. Miss Sarah Whippie founded the National School for the instruction of the children of Whitchurch in 1837. This is the building next to the church and 'overprinted' with the word 'Parochial' on the inscription. The 'National' Schools were those founded under the auspices of the Church of England.

(The Whippie's had featured prominently in
earlier Whitchurch life but there is no
mention of this family in the 1851 Census.)

5. The Post Office Directory, 1859, records "a national school for boys and girls".

6. Kelly's Directory for 1861 lists a National School. The same publication for 1866 and 1883 both record a National School and a British School.

7. Also, in Kelly's Directory of 1861, it is recorded that Francis Gorbell ran a boarding school for young gentlemen at Whitchurch House.

8. The present Whitchurch school was opened in 1914.

In the 1851 Census, out of approximately 100 children in the age range 5 - 15 years, some 57 were shown as scholars with ages ranging from 3 years to 15 years old.

No designation was applied to the others except in the case of 5 boys mentioned earlier, aged 10 - 12 years, who were described as agricultural labourers.

13. SURNAMES

103 different surnames are listed in the 1851 Census for Whitchurch and these are shown in Appendix I.

Those occuring more than once i.e. in separate households, are set out below with their frequency(in brackets).

Colston (5)	Hazell (5)	Heal (5)
Sheppard (4)	Cox (4)	Hall (4)
Baker (4)	Shallard (3)	Weeks (3)
Woolly (3)	Lucas (2)	Scammell (2)
Williams (2)	Cowles (2)	Fowles (2)
Parker (2)	Rich (2)	Palmer (2)
Harvey (2)	Hiscox (2)	Spear (2)
Brimble (2)	Clist (2)	Day (2)
Jeffris (2)	Wait (2)	Derrick (2)
Mills (2)	Hiercn (2)	Porter (2)

14. THE SPEAR FAMILY

The Enumerator for the 1851 Census in Whitchurch was Daniel Spear then aged 38 who was the village grocer: he was listed in Kelly's Directory for 1861 as having also acquired the post office and by 1883 he had become Parish Clerk. His daughter, Sarah, aged 5 at the time of the 1851 Census, is listed in 1861 as mistress at the National School.

His wife, Martha Spear, aged 30, is curiously listed in the Census as a bootbinder but since Daniel's father, aged 69, was a cordwainer and his wife Sarah a bootbinder we may perhaps assume that Martha worked as a bootbinder for her father-in-law.

15. COMMUNICATIONS

Whitchurch was in the Bristol Turnpike Trust area and the Whitchurch toll gate was situated at the corner of Maggs Lane where there is now a shop.

Tolls arising at toll gates were let by auction to the highest bidders and the auction at the White Hart, Brislington in July 1826 records the toll at the Whitchurch Gate in 1825 producing £670. (The toll at the Knowle Gate in the same year produced £660).

The Vestry minute book records, up until the 1890's, the annual election of a 'waywarden' who was responsible for supervising the upkeep of the parish roads.*

The Bristol and North Somerset Railway line from Bristol to Radstock, with its stop at Whitchurch Halt, was not opened until 1873. Because of the stiff gradients the journey from Bristol to Radstock took an hour and there were four trains a day except on Sundays.

In 1861, letters arriving at Whitchurch from Bristol were delivered at 7.40 a.m. and the afternoon collection closed at 5.15 p.m.

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*Sidney & Beatrice Webb in their book "The Story of the King's Highway" refer to the office of waywarden and state -

> "Such nominations were made with decent regularity, though the occurrence of complaints by some persons of having to serve continuously indicate that it was not easy to find a sufficient rota of suitable and willing inhabitants. In a grumbling, but on the whole good-tempered sort of way we see the farmers, in the rural parishes, taking it in turns to serve the office, occasionally pressing into the service the village innkeeper, or a little independent craftsman or shopkeeper. We do not gather that the duties were undertaken by the 'gentry', even such as were not Justices of the Peace, or that the office was often accepted by Clergyman or doctors, who were legally exempt or that it was ever imposed on the not inconsiderable number of women occupiers or owners of farms."

16. MISCELLANEOUS

1. In 1891 consideration was given to the requirements of the Keynsham sanitary authority in respect of the water supply of the Parish of Whitchurch. It was resolved by the Vestry meeting that in their opinion it was not necessary to erect a stand pipe in the village; that wells could be sunk to supply all tenants of properties with good and pure water. At an earlier meeting there was a reference to a well at the corner of the highway.

2. Also in 1891, there was a proposal, passed unanimously, that where there was not sufficient accommodation for cesspools for closets, the several owners of property be compelled by the Keynsham sanitory authority to provide earth closets for each dwelling house.

17. SOURCES

Public Record Office, London.
Somerset Record Office, Taunton.
British Library, London.
City Archives, Bristol.
Bristol Central Library.

... ...

This study is continuing and the authors would be grateful to receive any further information, especially from local inhabitants.

E.S. & A.D. WOOD.

SURNAMES

Lucas
Scammell
Shallard
Williams
Sheppard
Adlom
Veal
Curtis
Weeks
Cowels
Cox
Heal
Nicholls
Colston
Woolly
Bees
Hawkins
Fowles
Hall
Gibbins
Tucker
Belston
Matthias
Parker
Bowles
Rich
Rosewell
Sasper
Palmer
Harvey
Bowditch
Fox
Plummer
Gerrard
Wagland
Rapell
Doyle
Macaty
Collor
Hiscox
Franklin
Allen
Brewer
Hollway
Hasell
Spear
Wilshire
Price
Gully
Carter
Brimble
Clist
Day
Jeffris
Wait
Tomkins
James
Aram
Derrick
Brown
Cutler
Hapgood
Filter
Carpenter
King
Harris
Sampson
Winter
Porter
Baker
Tanels
Paydon
Mills
Constable
Smith
Hieron
Rogers
Connellan
Bryant
Tuck
Yeatman
Meredith
Dodge
Cummins
Gage
Mitchell
Collins
Challenger
Caver
Tyler
Hardwick
Saunders
New
Felton
Atkins
Loveday
Browning
Lewis
Russell
Dowling
Edgell
Barwell
Brookman

THE WHITCHURCH TITHE MAP 1840

DIANA SMITH

THE WHITCHURCH TITHE MAP 1840.

Tithe maps of English parishes were made following an Act of Parliament of 1836 which radically changed the way in which tithes were to be paid to the church. The Act ordered that in future all tithes had to be paid in money and not in kind, and directed that all parishes should produce a map with a schedule to show the ownership of all the land, the occupiers or tenants, the land use and the amount of tithe liable to be paid upon each parcel of land. A tithe map is therefore a very valuable historic document, and the Whitchurch tithe map is the earliest large-scale, accurate map of the whole parish.

The map shows the parish of Whitchurch in 1840 with a small sparsely populated village around the cross-roads by the parish church, and a few houses at Filwood and Whitchurch Green. All the owners of land are listed, the most prominent being Sir John Smythe, Bart., of Ashton Court and William Gore Langton Esq of Newton Park; all the tenants or occupiers of land are also named, together with all the field names and acreages and the state of cultivation of each piece of land. The majority of the parish was pastureland, with very little arable. Places of interest shown on the map include the Turn Pike on the Bristol to Wells road, with the Turn Pike house, at which tolls had to be paid, and this was situated on the site now occupied by the shop on the corner of Maggs Lane. The Pound where stray cattle were shut up was between the Post Office and Maggs Lane; the two inns, the White Hart and the Black Lion are shown, and the two large houses of Whitecross Court and Lyons Court, both existing today; at the other end of the social scale was the Poor House - this was on the Bristol road backing on to the churchyard. The Congregational chapel - now the United Reformed church - is also shown. The pattern of roads in the parish was very much as it is today.

The original Tithe Map of Whitchurch together with the schedule is housed in the Somerset Record Office at Taunton, but a photostat copy of both the map and the schedule are kept in the Bristol Record Office at the Council House on College Green, where they are available for inspection.

Diana Smith.

ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH, WHITCHURCH

W.G. ABBOTT

ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH, WHITCHURCH

The church, which is dedicated to St.Nicholas,stands on the site of a cell or chapel of St.White,an ancient British saint. The earliest description of the church is that given in " The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset " by the Rev. J. Collinson,who was the curate of St.Nicholas when the book was published in 1791.

The church is of considerable interest as an example of the kind of small village church which was common in Somerset during the early Middle Ages, with a short chancel, central tower and transepts. In many Somerset villages this early type of church was reconstructed and enlarged in the later Middle Ages, the chancels were enlarged and the central towers replaced by ornate towers at the western end of the churches. Because Whitchurch remained comparatively poor and sparsely populated such major work was not undertaken,and the early form of the building survives with only minor modifications. The basic structure is clearly Norman and was built at the end of the 12th century. The original building was in the shape of a cross and was modified later by the addition of the South aisle.

Three architectural periods are represented in the church:

1. Norman (1066 - 1200) - the tower, the north doorway,the wagon roof.
2. Early English (1200 - 1275) - the chancel
3. Perpendicular (1350 - 1530) - the bell openings, parapet and pyramid roof of the tower; the south aisle and the south chancel chapel.

The chancel is Early English and contains an odd shaped East window (c.1300). It has been renewed, but correctly. It has three lights, the middle one being shorter than the outer ones to allow for a quatre-foiled spheric quadrangle. It represents, in the middle light, the crucifixion; in the left hand light, Christ blessing the little children; and in the right hand light, Christ's commission to his disciples to feed his sheep. Beneath is the inscription, "To the Glory of God and in memory of Henry Coyle, B.A., during six years curate of this parish who died April 2nd, 1862, aged 35 years."

In the north wall of the chancel are two single lancet windows, extremely narrow and deeply splayed inside, the bottom splay being carried up to the opening by seven small steps.

The Tower is Norman with Perpendicular bell openings, parapet and pyramid roof. It is supported on four heavy arches which rest on corbels with trumpet-capitals. It contains one bell, the others being sold, in the past, to Queen Charlton.

The North chapel is very old and contains several tablets to the memory of the Stocker family, descendants of the ancient family of the Stockers of Chilcompton. On the floor is a flat stone with an incised cross in memory of Thomas Gay who was a Steward and Treasurer of the monastery of Keynsham. This chapel is now occupied by the organ. The north window is of the same odd shape as the chancel East windows but is not decorated.

The South chapel is the burial place of the Lyons and Holbeach families. On the south wall is a fine monument in marble to the Holbeach family of Lyons Court, 1735, and is signed by W. Lydyard of Keynsham. This chapel is now used as a vestry; earlier it was occupied by the family pew of the lords of the manor.

The nave and chancel still have their original wagon roofs.

The North doorway is Norman and the South porch is a massive old structure containing a Pre-Reformation Holy water stoup.

The font is Norman and is square with rounded corners at the lower edges. A carved wooden screen divides the South chapel from the south aisle.

In the floor of the church are many ancient gravestones, the oldest reading " Sara Lvkynes 1599." A tablet on the wall of the South aisle lists the benefactors of the church.

W.G.Abbott.

LYONS COURT

M.P. SLADE

LYONS COURT

Lyons Court,(now known as Lyons Court Farm) lies just off Church Lane, Whitchurch between St.Nicholas and Maes Knoll. It is believed to have been in existence since the 13th century and was originally used to administer the surrounding district on behalf of the Abbey of the Blessed Mary in Keynsham. The retainers for several generations were the Lyons family, until eventually the last of the family, Edith Lyon, married Thomas Holbeach. The Abbey was dissolved on January 23rd 1539 but Lyons Court appears to have remained in the Holbeach family until about 1688 when it was sold. The Holbeach family remained in Whitchurch for some time after this date, and there is a fine eighteenth-century monument to the family in the parish church.

After several other changes of ownership, Lyons Court eventually became the property of the Smythe family in 1799 and remained in their possession until 1916.

Although now adapted for modern living many of the features of Lyons Court have been restored by its present owners. Foundations found near the building suggest that it was once very much larger than it is now. The walls are very thick, as much as six feet in one room and several arches and small windows which had been blocked for many years with rubble and stones have been uncovered and restored as far as possible. It seems to have originally consisted of one lofty large hall with a wooden roof, with a few small rooms leading from it. In two of the small rooms there is a wall niche as if made for the placing of candles. Incorporated into another room is a huge solid stone arch which may well have been the original entrance. A large fireplace, with enough space for seats in the recess is known to exist but at present this is obscured by another more modern structure.

The doorways are low and arched and the original stone floor still remains throughout, although having been worn unevenly over the years, it has been covered in some places.

Two very small and narrow rectangular windows have been uncovered in the top part of the outside wall of the building. These do not appear to be shown on a sketch of Lyons Court made about 1840 and now in Taunton Museum.

The remains of two Roman stone coffins were found in a field adjoining Lyons Court in 1886 and the report of the Clifton Antiquaries Club for 1884-1888 states that these were preserved in the house but no trace of them exists now and they were possibly used for road-making. Bronze coins, dating from AD160 - AD350, animal bones, pieces of pottery and moulds were found in a ditch near the farm in 1960 and 1961.

The coat of arms of the Lyons family was 'argent two lions rampant respecting sable' (two black lions facing each other on a silver background) and at one time this was featured on a window of the house which bore shields of painted glass. The complete window was removed to Ashton Court sometime during the last century. In Bristol Cathedral there is an ancient map which also bears the Lyons family coat of arms although it is not named. This is yet another of the mysteries which surround Lyons Court, which is a fine example of a medieval house and, apart from the parish church, is the oldest surviving building in Whitchurch.

M.P.Slade.

THE DISSENTERS AND ZION CHAPEL

M.P. SLADE

THE DISSENTERS AND ZION CHAPEL

A book of records kept by the Bristol Society at the end of the 18th century shows that there were 10 dissenters in Whitchurch in 1797. Two years later the names were recorded, and although the writing is very faded, they appear to be as follows;

Sam Waite
William Godfrey and S. Godfrey
Samuel Sheppard
Mary Whippey
M. Nicklus
Rachel Sword
Mary Roome
S. Gadd
Thos. Emery

Whitchurch was reached by the Bristol Itinerant Society in 1817 and although regular preaching did not begin for at least another eight years a small Sunday school was started for children in a room somewhere in the village. A piece of ground was bought and a small chapel built in 1830. Nothing is known about the building but the Itinerant Society paid £5 as the balance of the cost.

There was a great deal of opposition within the village to this new project but by 1846 the chapel had 22 members. Evening services only were held, preachers were supplied by the Itinerant Society and people walked many miles to attend. In 1846 a day school, known as the British School, was started in the village and the children paid a small weekly fee for lessons.

The Census of Places of Religious Worship which was conducted on Sunday 30th March 1851 revealed that there were morning and evening services at the chapel and that the morning congregation numbered 60 including 27 children from the Sunday school, and that 85 people were present at the evening service.

In 1864 an unknown benefactor in the village gave a piece of land adjoining the old building to be used as a site for a new chapel. The architect was a Mr. Joseph Foster and the builders John Ford and Sons of Woollard. The new chapel, substantially as it is now, was opened in 1867 and registered for the solemnization of marriages in January 1877. A young couple, both residents of Whitchurch were married there three weeks later and were presented with a Family Bible and 6 silver spoons on behalf of the church. Apart from this, and the mention of the christening of a baby girl, no other records exist until 1898.

After this date the chapel records give a glimpse of many details of both the religious and social life of the village. A special service, followed later in the week by a tea and concert, are the first such events to be recorded and a small account book listing expenses still survives. The cost of tea, milk, sugar, bread and butter, buns and cake for those present cost £2. 0s. 2½d. It is interesting to note that on some of these occasions as many as 90 people were entertained and given tea although there was no water supply on the premises.

During the early 1900s there were various activities for the villagers including rambles, bazaars, socials, a tent mission (held in a field near the chapel), lantern slide shows and both Sunday and mid-week services. The congregation was made up of obviously poor people. At the end of 1904 the chapel's financial report showed a balance in hand of 3s. 10½d. The total of collections made during the whole of 1905 amounted to £16 15s 9d. At this time renovations to the chapel building cost £3 and the Sunday school was asked to pay for the repair of the hole in the roof of the small schoolroom adjoining the chapel. As there were about 50 children on the role at the time perhaps this is not surprising. Young ladies of the Sunday school regularly distributed tracts to houses in the district. There were many cases of hardship in the village and the records state that collections taken at communion services were used to help unfortunate families but very few actual details are given.

Activities for the young people of Whitchurch included a Band of Hope, a Christian Endeavour Society and a brass band, all of which were very well supported. For the ladies there was a weekly Mother's Meeting. A photograph of the front of the chapel taken sometime between 1914 and 1922 shows a board fixed to the wall advertising an Adult School but there is no mention made of this in any of the chapel records.

Few references are made in the records to the First World War beyond the fact that blinds had to be purchased for the chapel in 1916 after police complaints about lighted windows, the steps at the entrance were whitewashed to avoid accidents in the dark and the sums of 7s 0d and later 4s 0d were spent on insurance against damage by aircraft.

The chapel was lit by large oil lamps until the early 1920s; some of the lamps stood on standards while others were suspended from beams. There is still a slot in the book-rest of one of the pews where one of the lamp standards stood. They were later replaced by Tilley lamps, and by electricity in 1927.

In 1922 the premises were enlarged when the small hall adjoining the chapel was doubled in size. The later building is evident by the different stone used and most of the preparatory work was done voluntarily by the chapel members themselves - the whole enterprise cost £626. During the second World War this room was used as a meeting place for the local W.V.S and the Fire-watchers and as a rest-room for Red Cross workers.

By calling its own first full time minister in 1945 the chapel finally became independent of the Bristol Itinerant Society and remained the Whitchurch Congregational Church until 1972 The denomination then joined with Presbyterians and took the name Whitchurch United Reformed Church. It is now part of the Wells Road Pastorate, a group of four churches combining resources.

The chapel itself is a simple stone-built structure without a central aisle, the pews running across the centre of the building. The original windows have been replaced and a memorial rose window added in the centre of the back wall above the pulpit.

In 1953 a large hall was built in the grounds of the chapel and this is used extensively for the Sunday school, meetings and various social activities. A youth club building was completed in 1972.

M.P.Slade.

WHITCHURCH 1900 - 1945

W.G. ABBOTT

WHITCHURCH 1900 - 1945

Whitchurch at the beginning of the twentieth century was still a small village at the centre of a farming community. In fact a blacksmith still worked in the village smithy in 1921. Changes in the village stem from the splitting up of the Smythe estate in 1916.

The 1920's saw an expansion in the size of the village with the construction of the council houses in Bristol Road, Maggs Lane and St.Nicholas Road. Dene Road and some of the houses were constructed just before World War II,and post-war development included the remainder of Dene Road,Saltwell Avenue and the council houses in Churchways and Church Lane.

In 1930 the boundary of Bristol was extended,and this took in land from the west of the parish. The new boundary ran roughly south through Hengrove Farm to a point almost due west of White Cross Court. It then ran east to near the main road and then south again parallel to and slightly west of Ridgeway Lane and finally west almost on the line of Whitchurch Lane. The next extension of the boundary took place in 1933 and took in land in the area of Hengrove,up the main road to a point just north of White Cross Court and all land north of a line extending eastwards from Davids Road. A later extension took the boundary to a point on the main road at Saltwell Viaduct.

A number of men from Whitchurch served in the Armed Forces during the First World War. The remaining villagers played their part by entertaining wounded servicemen who were being treated in local hospitals. After the war was over, there was a parade of local servicemen in uniform through the village under Captain Young. To celebrate the end of hostilities, the villagers hired six charabancs for a day's outing to Weston-super-Mare

In World War II, over 100 men and women from Whitchurch served in the Forces and the village itself played a more direct part in the conflict. An anti-aircraft battery was sited in a field at the corner of Whitchurch Lane and Ridgeway Lane and during the blitz on Bristol, decoy fires were lit in open fields in the parish to confuse German bombers. As D-Day approached and the big build-up began, Americans used the area between Ridgeway Lane and the present line of Fortfield Road as an assembly area for equipment and vehicles shipped from the United States via Avonmouth.

The first telephone exchange for Whitchurch was in the old Post Office in the building which was once the old smithy. Mrs.Strange was at one time the operator. Up until 1931 this exchange was separate from Bristol with telephone numbers beginning at No.1. In 1931 Whitchurch became a satellite of Bristol and the old numbers were given a prefix of 411. Later Whitchurch became a separate automatic exchange and all telephone numbers were altered to 4 digit numbers beginning at 2,000.

The present Whitchurch Primary School was opened in 1914. Up to that date children were taught in the Parochial School - the building in Church Lane which is now the Church Hall.

Electricity came to Whitchurch in 1926-27 but the village had to wait until the end of the 1960s for street lighting to be installed.

In 1900 the only public transport serving the village was the railway from Whitchurch Halt. The major traffic on this line was coal from the North Somerset coalfield but from the opening of the line a passenger service was operated serving the villages between Frome, Radstock and Bristol. Although in passenger terms it was only a small branch, the line provided a useful alternative route to the south when other lines were congested, and on many occasions holiday excursions were routed via this line. This brought many different types of locomotives through the village and Great Western " Castles," " Halls " and even the famous locomotive the " City of Truro " were occasionally seen passing through Whitchurch Halt.

In 1900 the tramway system in Bristol was extended to Red Lion Hill, Knowle and was electrified. The No.10 service ran from Bristol Bridge to Knowle. In 1925 the Hanham to Bushey Park service, No.15, was also extended to Knowle. Possibly due to the few houses between Knowle and Whitchurch and also the service already provided by the trains, the trams never came any nearer to Whitchurch. The abandonment of tram routes and their replacement by bus services commenced in Bristol in May,1938 and on 3rd. September,1938,the trams to Knowle were replaced by buses. It was about this time that buses came to Whitchurch, first with single deckers and later with double decker buses.

Whitchurch was placed on the airways map with the construction of Whitchurch Aerodrome; for many years the main airport for Bristol. During World War II, Imperial Airways established a maintenance depot on the airfield for the major overhaul of their aircraft. Also during the war, an airline service was maintained to Lisbon from Whitchurch Aerodrome and it was on one of the scheduled flights to Lisbon that an aircraft carrying film star Leslie Howard was lost over the Bay of Biscay.

In 1935 the Black Lion Inn was rebuilt well back from the main road and during the excavations, evidence of an underground passageway was discovered. This revived memories of old tales which told of hidden passageways connecting the Black Lion with the church and the church with Lyons Court. Unfortunately no details of the finds were recorded, nor was the discovery pursued.

W.G.Abbott.

WHITCHURCH SINCE 1945

B. SLADE

WHITCHURCH SINCE 1945

In 1939 Whitchurch was still a rural village although Bristol was creeping nearer with ribbon development along the Wells Road and two development companies were building estates - Gilda Crescent on one side of the main road and Whitecross Avenue on the other. These two developments were brought to a halt by the onset of World War II,leaving a few half completed roads and a few isolated houses. The land that lies between Ridgeway Lane and Fortfield was used as an anti-aircraft site and an assembly point for the American Army transport shipped here in crates.

The housing shortage was acute after the war and the huts that had been used to house the soldiers on the gun site were taken over by civilians. As there had been no new building during the war years and materials were in short supply the pre-fabricated dwellings were erected on sites prepared by prisoners of war before their repatriation. The 'pre-fabs' are now nearly all demolished - a new development on the site of the first to go has re-housed most of the occupants. A second stage in this project has yet to be started.

A number of the 'pre-fabs' were occupied by Canadian Aircrews who operated from Whitchurch Airport. This had been the only Civil Airport in use during the war and it took some time to re-organize other civil airports as the war ended. Whitchurch Airport ceased to be used for flying when it became too small for modern requirements and operations were then transferred to the ex R.A.F wartime airfield at Lulsgate.

The vacated site was earmarked for a number of projects, some - like a new hospital - fell by the wayside. It is now used mainly for recreational facilities and is known as Hengrove Park. One corner has a housing estate, St.Giles, built on it. Near the airport's original main entrance, which still exists but is hidden by the new buildings, a large hangar has been converted into a sports centre and a running track has also been added next to it. A section of the land bordering Whitchurch Lane has been devoted to a small industrial estate and other parts have been used for new roads.

The railway line continued to pass through Whitchurch until 1969, although passenger services were discontinued in the 1950s. The torrential rain that caused much widespread havoc in the Chew Valley washed away lengths of track and the line, which was already under sentence of closure came to an early end.

The telephone service has undergone several changes since the war. It reverted to a Whitchurch exchange after being a Bristol satellite for some 15 years with a 411 prefix. It then had numbers in the 2,000s. A new exchange was built on land behind the Chapel to serve the rapidly growing demand and on October 22nd,1975 the prefix 83 was added to the existing telephone numbers,effectively making the exchange once more a part of the Bristol system.

The number of houses between Knowle and Whitchurch in 1945 was probably in the region of 1,000 and a look at a map of that period will show how few there were in comparison with the numbers today. In 1951 the Bristol city boundary was extended from Whitecross Avenue to Saltwell Viaduct so that all the new estates are within the city. Stockwood, Bridge Farm, Court Farm, Rookery Farm, Elm Tree Park, St.Giles,Half Acre, are all estates on land that was once in the manor of Whitchurch.

Some of the old farm houses have been retained within the new developments,such as Whitecross Court, Ridgeway House, Bridge Farm and Hengrove Farm. The names of some of the farms have also been perpetuated by calling the estates after them - Bridge Farm Estate, Rookery Farm Estate and Court Farm Estate (although the two latter farm buildings have disappeared) Other old field and local names have been adopted for various roads in the locality, such as Briary Leaze, Rodfords Mead, Binley Close, Saltwell Avenue etc. Filwood of course derives its name from the old Phylwood that used to occupy part of the old airport site. Burnbush and Perrycroft Schools both take their titles from old local names. The ancient name of the village, which was Fylton (spelt variously as Filton, Philton, Felton, Phylton) has unfortunately not been used and whoever chooses the road names has missed the opportunity of using some interesting ones, such as Claylands, Yellowlands, Stinty Mead, Upper Garbage Leaze and Bitter Splot.

Fields in the district that have not been built over are, in most cases, the same as they appeared in the old Smythe maps of the Manor nearly 200 years ago. Some of the trees and hedges that mark some of the older garden boundaries can be traced back to these early maps. A number of the roads follow the course of the original country lanes, although now somewhat straightened and widened, and the Wells Road is the old turnpike road.

Very little development has taken place around the ancient centre of the village since the war. Saltwell Avenue, partly completed when war was declared, was finished, about 30 houses were built in Churchways, a few private houses in Bristol Road, Staunton Lane and Church Lane. More recently the houses and bungalows in St. Nicholas Road and Maggs Lane have been added. All these have virtually filled the gaps left by previous developments. The imposing Vicarage, built in 1883, was demolished in April of this year.

A comparison of photographs of the village in the early part of the century with its appearance at the present time shows that a large part of it is substantially the same and anyone revisiting the place after 50 or 60 years would have little difficulty in recognising it. The biggest change is on the corner of Staunton Lane where the White Hart and old Black Lion used to stand. They have been replaced by a new Black Lion and a large car park.

The increase in population due to new developments on land that was once in the manor of Whitchurch has resulted in the building of a number of schools and places of worship to meet the needs of the community. Tyning, Hengrove,Bridge Farm, Perry Court,Burnbush,Waycroft,Wansdyke and Stockwood Green schools all retain local names. St.Bernadette Roman Catholic School and the Bush training centre have also been built since the war.

In the same period a number of churches have been constructed such as the Free Church and the Church of Christ the Servant,both at Stockwood, the Mormon Church and St. Bernadette Roman Catholic Church both near Whitecross Court and of modern architectural design. Counterslip Baptist Church was originally to be built of the stones from the old church at Counterslip in Bristol. The Church had been dismantled and the stones numbered with this intention but the idea was abandoned in favour of the present building which stands near the junction of New Fosseway Road and Wells Road. St.Augustines at Bridge Farm is the most recent addition and serves both Anglicans and Methodists.

What does lie ahead for Whitchurch? Will it become part of Bristol with a dual carriage A37 scything through and all the buildings on its route swept away, or will a by-pass be provided so that the only road signs to be seen on entry will bear the legend 'Access Only'? The area which is now the Black Lion car park and the corner of Staunton Lane could be the village green with shady trees and a duck pond. The village cross could be re-instated (the base is at present on the land at the end of Sleep Lane by the bus lay-by) The land on either side of Saltwell Viaduct could be landscaped, with a lake and a waterful supplied by the Saltwell. There are endless possibilities and of course the cost would be high, but having remained a rural community for hundreds of years in spite of everything, it could be kept intact for future generations.

B. Slade.